

# Inside Region 3

Information From the Accomplishment Reporting System

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## Ohio Among Eight States To Receive Federal Funds for Major Boating Projects

Ohio's Middle Bass Island State Park will receive \$861,383 in federal funds to expand facilities for Lake Erie boaters, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ohio joins Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington in sharing \$4.4 million in grants for nine boating facility projects to receive funding in 2002.

The grants are the second round of awards made under the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program, administered by the Service. The funding is authorized by the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 and funded in part by excise taxes on motorboat fuel. BIG grant program funds are aimed at improving docking facilities for transient, non-trailerable boats along the navigable waterways of the United States.

"Thanks to the BIG program, millions of people will be able to enjoy greater and better recreational and fishing opportunities off America's shores," said Service Acting Director Marshall Jones.

"The BIG program is a big deal for recreational boat owners who will now have the opportunity to visit more state and local parks and historic sites which heretofore were inaccessible by boat," added Boat U.S. Vice President Michael Sciulla.

The BIG program provides states with funding for: mooring buoys; day-docks; transient slips; safe harbor facilities (including safe anchorage or a harbor of refuge during a storm); float

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--Photo by Scott Flaherty

### EPA Administrator Visits Minnesota Valley NWR

*Rick Schultz, manager of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington, Minn., explains the refuge's wildlife values and geography to Gov. Christie Whitman, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during Whitman's visit to the Refuge Jan. 25. The refuge hosted an afternoon press conference for the EPA. For more, see page 3.*

## North America's First International Refuge Michigan's Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Added to Refuge System

The efforts of an unprecedented partnership of federal, state, county and local governments, private industry, conservation groups and citizens to improve the quality of life along an enduring industrial river in Detroit, Mich., paid off December 21, 2001, when President George W. Bush signed a bill officially creating the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge, the first international refuge in North America, will conserve, protect and restore habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 65 kinds of fish and 300 species of migratory birds on more than 5,000

acres along the lower Detroit River in Michigan and Canada.

The refuge includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and riverfront lands along 18 miles of the Lower Detroit River from Zug Island south to the southern boundary of Sterling State Park in Monroe County, Michigan. The new refuge also includes Mud Island and Grassy Island, lands managed by the Service as Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The 330-acre Wyandotte

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## Region To Manage Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

NWR will be re-designated part of Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

"As managers of the refuge, one of our first initiatives will be to reach out and engage partners and citizens and involve them in the planning process, to help us plot conservation and recreation decisions for the future of the refuge," said Refuge Manager Doug Spencer. "As a new member of the National Wildlife Refuge System, it is our policy to make areas of this refuge open to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and environmental interpretation."

The refuge is a result of a unprecedented partnership of government agencies, businesses, conservation groups, landowners and private citizens on both sides of the border who came together to improve the quality of life on the Lower Detroit River. The refuge is also a key component of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, a community-based program that seeks to build "green" infrastructure and create outdoor recreational opportunities in Wayne County, Mich. The public-private partnership gained momentum over the past year through a series of intricate cooperative agreements, land exchanges and acquisitions involving governments, private businesses, citizens and conservation groups.

In March 2001, Michigan Representative John D. Dingell introduced legislation to create the refuge. The bill, H.R. 1230, encourages public-private partnerships to promote wildlife conservation and habitat restoration while protecting private property rights. The bill also authorizes the Service to acquire future lands for the refuge through cooperative agreements, donations or to buy outright from willing sellers at fair market value. Similarly,



Herb Gray, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Susan Whelan, member of Canadian Parliament, are working to enact the Canadian component of

the international refuge.

"The creation of an international wildlife refuge is a significant step towards restoring the health and vitality of this invaluable natural resource," Dingell said. "The legislation demonstrates how, working as a team, federal, state and local officials in the United States and in Canada can work with businesses, conservationists and citizens to create something special that will improve the quality of life for all our citizens."

The Lower Detroit River contains shipping channels and shoals and islands that serve as habitat for numerous fish and wildlife. Located at the intersection of the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, an estimated three million ducks, geese, swans and coots migrate annually through the region. More than 300,000 diving ducks stop each year to feed on wild celery beds in the river.

The Canada-United States North American Waterfowl Management Plan has identified the Detroit River as part of one of 34 waterfowl habitat areas of major concern in the U.S. and Canada. (Lower Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin.)

The Detroit River is also known for its duck hunting and fishing opportunities, activities the Service plans to continue on parts of the refuge.

"Among our first goals will be to establish hunting and fishing plans that provide ample opportunities for these activities while incorporating refuge goals and conserving habitat," Spencer said. "Long term, restoring habitat on refuge land will benefit hunters and fishers all along the river." *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

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## Ohio to Receive \$861,383 For Boating Activity Projects

ing and fixed piers and breakwaters; dinghy docks; restrooms; retaining walls; bulkheads; dockside utilities; pump-out stations, trash collection and recycling facilities; dockside electric, water and telephone capabilities; navigational aids; and marine fueling stations.

The grant awarded to Ohio will fund several projects at Middle Bass Island State Park on Lake Erie, including harbor enlargement; repair and restoration of a seawall; and installation of 30 docks accommodating up to 60 transient boats. Docks will be 35 to 40 feet long and will be available for short-term rentals up to 10 days. These projects augment improvements made under the 2001 BIG program and when complete will offer boaters a total of 86 docks, with space for 170 transient boats.

BIG transient facilities must be built in waters deep enough for boats 26 feet and larger to navigate a minimum of six feet of depth at low tide. One-time dredging is allowed to provide access between open water and tie-up facilities.

BIG program funds are being distributed each year over a four-year period ending in 2003. To ensure that each State gets a share, funding is provided on a two-tiered basis. For tier-one grants, all States are eligible to receive up to \$100,000 per grant cycle as long as their proposals meet the program's guidelines. Tier-two projects are designed for larger, more expensive projects and are awarded on a competitive basis.

The nine tier-two grants were selected from 58 proposals submitted from across the country. Acting Director Jones decided to fund the nine projects based upon recommendations received from a panel of Service Regional staff as well as those submitted by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. *Georgia Parham, External Affairs*



## Minnesota Valley Refuge Hosts EPA Press Conference

An exceptionally warm late January weather, combined with an abundance of bright midday sun made an idyllic setting for a national announcement of a new watershed protection initiative. Christie Whitman, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the new initiative during an afternoon visit to Minnesota Valley NWR Jan. 25.

Governor Whitman used the Minnesota River as a backdrop to announce a \$21 million grant program which is being set up to improve water quality in up to 20 watershed basins across the country. The program proposal will be included in President Bush's 2003 budget. EPA will receive recommendations from each state, and will then determine which projects will receive funding.

In addition to Whitman, the refuge hosted members of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and scores of visitors and members of the news media.

Refuge Manager Rick Schultz and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Director Karen Studders met prior to the press conference, taking a few minutes to view the Minnesota River Valley from the overlook behind the Visitor Center. Schultz took the opportunity to detail some of the good work being accomplished at Minnesota Valley, particularly



—photo by Scott Flaherty

*Refuge manager Rick Schultz welcomes a visiting state officials and news media to Minnesota Valley NWR.*

in the area of environmental education targeted to the diverse populations of metro area elementary school students.

Schultz later began the press conference by informing the media and visitors about the refuge, the national wildlife refuge system and its upcoming Centennial celebration. Following a brief remark by Studders, Gov. Whitman announced the EPA initiative.

"I think water is going to be the major environmental challenge of the 21st century, and a large part of that is because non-point source pollution is the bulk of

the degradation that is occurring now," Whitman said. "President Bush understands the importance of watershed protection and he is taking action to make America's waterways cleaner and healthier for the families that enjoy them."

Gov. Whitman added that Minnesotans have a special relationship with watersheds. "In a land of 10,000 lakes, it could be said that Minnesota is one great watershed," she said. *Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR*

## Lake Sturgeon Status Assessment Project Begins

Participants in the Lake Michigan lake sturgeon status assessment project met Dec. 18 to share expertise, coordinate and standardize activities, and discuss a number of issues relating to implementing the project's first field season that begins this spring. The project is funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation.

The meeting was convened by Rob Elliott of the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (FRO) who serves as project manager. Seventeen people attended, including principal investigators and researchers from eight agencies and institutions involved in this project. Dur-

ing the meeting, agencies reported on the status of each sub-project. The pros and cons of various sampling strategies for each river system were discussed. The methods and levels of sampling appropriate for each river system were discussed, plans for issuing individual and project-wide collector's permits were shared, and plans for needed equipment acquisitions were made.

Additional progress includes advertising for and selecting five graduate students and initiating their graduate projects, the hiring of technicians, submission of an announcement for a Term position with the Service, the ordering of gear and materials for field collections, study

site visitation and preliminary gear testing in some rivers, and initiation of assessments in 2001 for data and sample collection in a few rivers.

The first year's funding from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust was received by the Service in December and is being distributed through cooperative agreements. The first year's funding from the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation is being distributed by the Wisconsin DNR.

The three-year study will provide the first comprehensive assessment of the status of lake sturgeon throughout Lake Michigan. *Robert Elliott, Green Bay Fishery Resources Office*

## Service to Examine Impacts of Recreation on Protected Gray Wolves at Voyageurs National Park in Northern Minnesota

As part of a formal consultation process called for by the Endangered Species Act, the Service announced Feb. 1 that it was modifying portions of its 1992 Biological Opinion that recommended the park restrict use of motorized vehicles on selected frozen bays in the park. The modified language essentially lifts the previous restrictions which were implemented with the intent of minimizing harm to the wolf.

Biologists from the Service have examined new findings from the National Park Service that relate to the effects of winter recreation activities on gray wolves at Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota.

"As part of our formal consultation 10 years ago with Voyageurs National Park, we requested that the park investigate whether human activity in and around the park results in adverse cumulative impacts to the gray wolf" said Dan Stinnett, field supervisor of the Service's Twin Cities Field Office. "The new information reveals that, among other findings, bay closure has no biological significance to a healthy gray wolf population at Voyageurs National Park."

The modifications to the Biological Opinion are based on nine years of wolf research conducted in the park that determined closing the bays specifically for wolf protection was unwarranted.

"While we have modified our language regarding restrictions on the bays, the main tenets of our 1992 Biological Opinion are still in place," Stinnett said. "We continue to recognize the potential for inter-



--photo by Scott Flaherty

*According to the National Park Service, gray wolf densities at Voyageurs National Park range between 32-46 wolves per 1,000 square kilometers.*

action between wolves and humans at the park and, with the new information, can determine if other measures are needed to minimize the likelihood of adverse impacts. Additionally, all measures necessary to protect areas important to the federally-threatened bald eagle remain in effect at the park."

Approximately two-thirds of the park's 218,054 acres are closed to snowmobiles and available to gray wolves, its prey and other wildlife. Lifting restrictions in the bays will provide an additional 4,667 acres of frozen lake surface to winter park users.

In 1992, the Service issued a Biological Opinion that addressed the impact of recreational activities on federally-threatened bald eagles and gray wolves in the park along the Minnesota-Canada border. While impacts were determined not to jeopardize the continued existence of either species, the Service recommended park managers adopt prudent management actions, including restricted motorized vehicle activities, at 17 bays in winter for gray wolves. It also recommended the Park Service determine whether the cumulative impacts of human activity in and around the park would lead to higher incidence of adverse human and gray wolf contact.

Park managers adopted the Service's recommendations and restricted winter snowmobiling in specific bay areas. With Service concurrence, restrictions were lifted on six of the 17 bays in 1997.

The Park Service also began its own study to assess the cumulative impact of human activities on wolf behavior in the park. The results of research performed over the Park Service's nine-year study indicated that closure of the bays had "no discernable or identifiable effect on where wolves go and what they do in the park," and, that continued restrictions on motorized vehicles in fragmented bay areas was unwarranted. As a result, Park managers lifted the restrictions it had placed on snowmobiling in the bays in November 2001. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

## Freshwater Mussels Surveyed on Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation

Biologists from the Ashland Fishery Resources Office (FRO) and Sokaogon Chippewa Community (SCC) recently conducted a survey for freshwater mussels on several streams and one lake in the reservation boundary and surrounding area. SCC fisheries biologist Mike Pruett and Service fisheries biologist Glenn Miller conducted the surveys Jan. 14

on waters the SCC is using as water quality monitoring stations.

Biologists collected mussels at each site, recording necessary biological information (length and height measurements of the shells, age and sex, if possible) and checked for gravidity. The mussels were then returned to the location from which they were collected.

Three of the sites are being recommended as possible monitoring sites, utilizing the mussels as bio-indicators along with the water quality data being collected by the SCC. These sites would be monitored every two to four years for any changes in species numbers and composition. *Glenn Miller, Ashland Fishery Resources Office*



## East Lansing Field Office Hosts North American Plover Researchers

The Service's East Lansing Field Office in conjunction with other federal and state resource agency partners, hosted the first-ever gathering of plover researchers and managers for the 2002 Meeting on North American Plover Species at Risk Jan.23-24 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

More than 120 attendees from 23 states and four Canadian provinces came to share information, present recent research and discuss common issues relating to plover conservation.

More than 30 authors gave oral presentations on topics ranging from habitat use to population modeling. The program included talks on topics as diverse as population status, predator management, winter distribution, outreach and land use planning for shoreline conservation. Researchers also reported on the results



*Piping plover*

of recent studies on plover biology. Break-out discussion groups were organized following each day's technical session. Topics included the international census, outreach, banding, winter/breeding cooperation, and predator management.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' new video, "The

Piping Plover...An Endangered Bird of the Great Lakes Coastline," was also available for viewing during the discussion sessions.

On Wednesday evening, attendees gathered to meet poster authors and discuss the numerous projects on display. Fourteen poster papers were presented by authors that included the National Park Service, USDA Wildlife Services, the Corps of Engineers and a number of universities. Materials and equipment used in plover field research and conservation were also displayed.

Participants left the meeting with greater knowledge of plover ecology, new approaches to solving complex issues, and a renewed enthusiasm for conservation. *Jack Dingledine, East Lansing Field Office*



Photo by Judy Plunkett

## Mingo Refuge Thanks Volunteers

*Rick McLean (right) receives a plaque from Molly Mehl of Mingo National Wildlife Refuge recognizing him as the 2001 Mingo NWR Volunteer of the Year. The award was presented during a recent banquet honoring the efforts of refuge*

*volunteers who donated nearly 1,800 hours to the refuge during 2001. Volunteers helped complete numerous projects such as overlook rehabilitation, children's activity guides, road grading, and the planting of food plots. Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR*

## Published Report Supports Use of Toxicity Equivalency Approach for Wildlife Risk Assessment

The Service's Environmental Contaminants Specialists Lisa Williams and Tim Kubiak worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to publish, "Workshop Report on the Application of 2,3,7,8-TCDD Toxicity Equivalence Factors to Fish and Wildlife" (EPA/630/R-01/002).

This report documents peer-reviewed consensus that the toxicity equivalency methodology is technically appropriate for evaluating risk to fish, birds, and mammals associated with dioxin-like compounds including polychlorinated dibenzop-dioxins (PCDDs), furans (PCDFs), and biphenyls (PCBs).

The EPA can now move forward in using this approach in setting water quality criteria and remediation goals that will be more protective than setting them based on individual compounds in turn.

The workshop that led to this report was the direct result of the Service's 1995 Biological Opinion on U.S. EPA's Great Lakes Water Quality Guidance. *Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office*

## Service Hosts Public Meetings to Discuss Double-Crested Cormorant Issues in Wisconsin and Michigan

The Service hosted public meetings last month in Wisconsin and Michigan to gather comments and discuss its recently released draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on double-crested cormorant management in the United States.

The Service-sponsored meetings (Jan. 7 in Green Bay, Wis., and Jan. 8 in Mackinaw City, Mich.) were two of 10 public meetings held in nine states and the District of Columbia to gather public input on double-crested cormorant management issues.

The draft EIS analyzes various options for managing rapidly growing cormorant populations in order to reduce conflicts with recreational fishing, commercial aquaculture, and other birds and natural resources.

Cormorants have been federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act since 1972, a period when their populations had dropped precipitously due to use of the pesticide DDT, killings by humans and the overall declining health of many ecosystems, especially that of the Great Lakes. Today, the population is at historic highs, due in large part to the presence of ample food in their summer and winter ranges, federal and state protection, and reduced contaminant levels.

Between 1970 and 1991, in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada the number of double-crested cormorant nests increased from 89 to 38,000, with an average annual increase of 29 percent. By 1997, the Great Lakes population had reached approximately 93,000 pairs. The total population of double-crested cormorants in the U.S. and Canada has most recently been estimated at approximately 2 million birds.

The population resurgence of double-crested cormorants has led



The number of Great Lakes' nest sites for the double-crested cormorant have increased by more than 29 percent annually since 1970. Approximately 93,000 pairs were recorded in 1997.

to increasing concern about the birds' impact on commercial and recreational fishery resources. The draft EIS evaluates six management alternatives, including such options as continuing or expanding current management practices, implementing only non-lethal management techniques, issuing a new Depredation Order to address public resource conflicts (the Service's proposed alternative), reducing cormorant populations at a regional level, and establishing frameworks for a cormorant hunting season.

The Service's proposed action would establish a new Depredation Order authorizing state, tribal, and federal land management agencies to implement a double-crested cormorant management program, while maintaining federal oversight of populations via reporting and moni-

toring requirements to ensure sustainable populations. Control activities carried out under this new depredation order would take place on public and private lands and waters where double-crested cormorant populations are having a negative impact on public resources such as fish, plants and other wildlife. Under this action, the 1998 Aquaculture Depredation Order would continue to allow cormorants to be taken at commercial freshwater aquaculture facilities and State-owned fish hatcheries in 13 States and would be expanded to include winter roost control by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services Program in those States. A Service regulation prohibiting lethal control of cormorants under most circumstances at National Fish Hatcheries would be revoked.

The public is being asked to provide written comments on the EIS. Comments must be received by February 28, 2002. Comments may be mailed or delivered to the Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 634, Arlington, Virginia 22203. In addition, comments on the DEIS may be submitted via electronic mail (e-mail) to : [cormorant\\_eis@fws.gov](mailto:cormorant_eis@fws.gov), or via fax at (703) 358-2272.

Requests for copies of the DEIS should be mailed to Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 634, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Copies of the DEIS can also be downloaded from the Division of Migratory Bird Management web site at: <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/issues/cormorant/cormorant.html>. For further information, call the division at (703) 358-1714.



## Region Hosts First-Ever National Junior Duck Stamp Conference

Junior Duck Stamp Program coordinators from 26 states, the District of Columbia and every Service Region attended the first-ever National Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator Conference Jan. 22 - 24, at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington, Minn. In addition to state and federal agencies, representatives from several non-governmental organizations attended.

Region 3 Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System Nita Fuller welcomed the participants. Terry Bell, acting federal duck stamp director and National Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator spoke candidly on the status of the Junior Duck Stamp Program and challenged the participants to generate a list of recommendations for the Program which she could carry back to Washington, DC.

Terry Bell also recognized Steve Wilds, Region 3 chief of migratory birds for setting a precedent for the nation. Within the National Wildlife Refuge System, Steve Wilds is the first to provide actual funding to the Junior Duck Stamp Programs in all of the states in Region 3.

The conference included presentations on the history of both the Federal and Junior Duck Stamp Programs, waterfowl identification, the basics of running a Junior Duck Stamp Program, the Junior Duck Stamp Curriculum and state standards of education, outreach and teacher resource materials, and partnerships and grant writing. Participants also heard from the philatelic community, teachers, parents, artists and three National Junior Duck Stamp winners.

Participatory sessions allowed for the participants to highlight their state programs and what works for them. One brainstorming session was held on "Marketing the Junior Duck Stamp," and another on the Junior Duck Stamp Program carving a niche for itself in the 2003 Centennial.

A powerful visioning session addressed coordinator needs at the state level and the formation of concrete recommendations and action items. The coordinators voiced their vision for expanding and improving the program at the national level



--photo by Steve Kufirin

*Former winning national Junior Duck Stamp artists Becky (center) and Bonnie Latham(right) join their mother Karen Latham to talk about different mediums used in their duck stamp art.*



*Conference attendees included three recent winners of the National Junior Duck Stamp Program including Aremy McAnn, whose trumpeter swan (left) won the 2001 contest, and Bonnie Latham, whose Northern pintails (right) won the 2000 contest.*

in coming years. Bringing together the creative and passionate juices of the Junior Duck Stamp Coordinators made for a powerful conference. The overall success of the conference is reflected in the remarks provided in the participant evaluation. "The information more than met my expectations! The ideas, materials, and networking will prove invaluable in expanding our state's Junior Duck Stamp Program." "I really enjoyed and learned lots at this conference. It was the best overall week conference I've ever been to. The amount of ideas and synergy is incredible." "Having Aremy McCann and the Latham Family were special details. Great balance of waterfowl, stamps, art, share time and planning." "I

had a feeling of isolation about the program before coming to this workshop. Now I have a renewed feeling of motivation and plenty of contacts." "Absolutely met my expectations! I didn't expect to come at the program from so many angles. It really added to my ability to spread the word about the program."

In 12 years the Junior Duck Stamp Program has grown from a pilot project with two states participating to its current status of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and it is now expanding to include U.S. Territories as well.

For more information contact Anne Shea at 612-713-5269 or Judie Miller at 952-858-0712. *Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR*

## Public Workshops Will Examine Restoring Perch to Green Bay

The Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum is planning a series of three public workshops this winter to develop recommendations on how to bring back yellow perch to Green Bay, Wis. Established by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Forum is a 13 member advisory committee of sport and commercial fishers, members of the public and resource agency representatives that provides informed recommendations on Lake Michigan fish management issues.

Sport and commercial fishers and Wisconsin DNR fishery biologists are very concerned about the decline of yellow

perch in Green Bay. The Forum will organize three workshops to develop a common understanding of yellow perch problems in Green Bay, and develop management recommendations for the Wisconsin DNR. The workshops will be open to the public.

Mark Holey, project leader of the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (FRO) is a member of the Forum and serves on the workshop steering committee. Fishery Biologist Chuck Bronte, also from the Green Bay FRO, serves on another committee with Holey to identify and invite experts to make

presentations at the workshops.

Declining numbers of yellow perch in Green Bay have been attributed to the dramatic increase in cormorants, excessive sport and commercial fishing pressure, and to interactions with exotic fish species such as white perch, zebra mussels and carp. The workshops will explore the mechanisms for the decline in the yellow perch numbers and prioritize the available management actions to reverse their decline.

*Mark Holey, Green Bay Fishery Resources Office*

## New Video Highlights Benefits of Drawdown on Mississippi River's Pool 8

A new video titled, "Renewing the River – Water Level Management on the Upper Mississippi River" is being finalized by the interagency Water Level Management Task Force (WLMTF). The video provides an overview of an experimental 1.5-foot drawdown conducted last summer on Pool 8 of the Upper Mississippi River near LaCrosse, Wis., and Brownsville, Minn., to restore aquatic vegetation in the pool.

The abundance of vegetation has declined since construction of Lock and Dam 8 about 60 years ago. The WLMTF is interested in conducting a similar but smaller drawdown this summer to restore more aquatic vegetation.

The video will be shown at a series of public workshops February 11, 12 and 14 to gather information from the public on the 2002 proposal. Partners in the effort include the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Gary Wege, Twin Cities Field Office*

## Public Contributes to Plans For Potential Tobico Marsh Restoration

More than 30 local residents met with representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and General Motors Jan. 30, to share information on the potential restoration of Tobico Marsh. A settlement for natural resources damages in Saginaw River and Bay provides for restoration work in the marsh, located along Saginaw Bay near Bay City, Mich. The scoping meeting helped collect information on water fluctuations and other issues relating to the

marsh before the parties to the settlement develop proposed alternatives for restoration. Local residents raised concerns about potential impacts from a nearby landfill and provided a historical perspective on the marsh and Great Lakes water levels.

The goal of this project is to restore natural water fluctuations for this 1,300 acre marsh and improve its connection to Saginaw Bay. *Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office*

## June's North American Prairie Conference Will Gather Experts and Advocates For Prairie Restoration

Service employees involved in prairie conservation are invited to attend the 18th North American Prairie Conference June 23-27 in Kirksville, Mo. The conference, co-sponsored by the Service's Columbia Field Office, will gather as many prairie experts, enthusiasts and advocates as possible to share knowledge, ideas and to build partnerships for prairie restoration and reconstruction.

The meeting will include symposia, contributed papers, posters, workshops and field trips. The deadline for submitting abstracts and presentations is Feb. 15. However, late abstracts (within rea-

son) will be accepted.

Presentations should address the following themes:

- Prairie restoration and reconstruction.
- Importance of biodiversity to society
- Legislative and organizational initiatives to preserve prairie
- Prairie education and outreach
- Prairie as pollution control and environmental improvement.

For more information, contact Kelly Srigley-Werner, Missouri Private Lands Coordinator (573) 876-1911 ext. 112.

*Kelly Srigley-Werner, Missouri Private Lands Office*



## 50 Degrees in January?

# Upper Mississippi Refuge Hosts Ice Fishing Workshop

The day was a warm 50 degrees but the fun of ice fishing didn't get missed in the warm temperature. About 30 kids and adults participated in an ice fishing clinic sponsored by the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge on Jan. 31. "We partnered with the Minnesota DNR - MinnAqua Program and the 4-H Extension Office to organize the event," said Interpretive Specialist Cindy Samples. "The Friends of the Mississippi River Refuges always come through with the food and help when we organize an event like this."

Participants spent about an hour inside the Lake Park Lodge on Lake Winona learning how to ice fish. Kathy Beaulieu, an education specialist with the MinnAqua program, instructed the group in basic ice fishing rules and techniques. Beaulieu also helped out with last year's event. She went over basic ice fishing rules and techniques. Outside, Service staff were drilling holes in the ice for the group. Watershed biologist, Tex Hawkins and bio-techs, Brian Pember and Brian Stemper scouted out the ice for safe fishing. They drilled holes for the participants and set up ice shacks. Although



--photo by Cindy Samples

Brian Pember (left) and "Tex" Hawkins use a gas-powered auger to drill fishing holes on a frozen stretch of the Mississippi River.

the shacks weren't needed to ward off cool temps, for some participants it was their first time inside a shack.

Each participant made a jig stick (ice fishing pole) and, led by Service and Volunteer fishing guides, hit the ice for some

fishing. As for fishing successes, nine year-old, Tim Brule said, "You might catch something later." *Cindy Samples, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge*

## Accomplishment Reports Received

The following reports were processed by the Accomplishment Reporting System between Jan. 10 and Feb. 9, 2002. Employees can search reports using the Report Manager utility in the ARS. The ARS database contains more than 3,500 accomplishment reports filed since August 1999.

### 1. More than 11,700 Wood Ducks Banded During Summer of 2001

*Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs*

### 2. Local Conservation & Sports Groups Interested in NRDA Restoration

*Colette Charbonneau, Green Bay Field Office*

### 3. New Video Highlights Benefits of Drawdown on Mississippi River's Pool 8

*Gary Wege, Twin Cities Field Office*

### 4. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Comes Rescues Ashland FRO

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

### 5. Division of Migratory Birds Assists With Arctic Canada Goose Work

*Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs*

### 6. Three Convicted in Illegal Killing of Alaskan Brown Bear

*Ed Spoon, Madison LE*

### 7. 375 Attend 8th Annual Winterfest at Sherburne NWR

*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

### 8. Computer Support for Field Stations - Advanced

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

### 9. 2001 Lake Huron Lake Trout Strain Evaluation Complete

*Emily Zollweg, Alpena FRO*

### 10. Here Fishy, Fishy

*Cynthia Samples, UMRNW&FR-HQ*

### 11. Quick Response Research Funding for 2002

*Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs*

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## Accomplishment Reports Received

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**12. Public Contributes Information for Tobico Marsh Restoration**

*Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office*

**13. Chequamegon Bay Zebra Mussel Task Force to Increase Efforts for 2002**

*Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO*

**14. WET & WILD Workshop Co-hosted by Seney NWR**

*Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR*

**15. Process Coded Wire Tags to Evaluate Lake Trout Restoration**

*Stewart Cogswell, Green Bay FRO*

**16. EPA Director Visits Minnesota Valley NWR**

*Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR*

**17. National Junior Duck Stamp Conference Makes a Big Splash**

*Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR*

**18. Mingo NWR Says "Thanks to the Volunteers"**

*Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR*

**19. Four Sentenced in Iowa Baiting Investigation**

*Dan Burlison, St. Peters LE*

**20. Panel Presentation for Corps of Engineers**

*Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)*

**21. Region 3 Co-hosts Meeting on North American Plover Species at Risk**

*Jack Dingleline, East Lansing Field Office*

**22. Fish Aging Techniques Subject of Michigan Workshop**

*Adam Kowalski, Alpena FRO*

**23. Service Asking For Public Input on Tobico Marsh Restoration Plans**

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

**24. Public Workshops to Gather Input on Bringing Back Perch to Green Bay**

*Mark Holey, Green Bay FRO*

**25. Ashland FRO staff prepare for State of Lake Superior Report**

*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

**26. Service Updates Wisconsin State Partners on Status of Nuisance Fish**

*Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO*

**27. Lake Michigan Lake Sturgeon Status Assessment Project Begins**

*Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO*

**28. Minnesota DNR Uses Federal Aid to Increase Public Boating Access at Lake Minnetonka**

*Julie Morin, Federal Aid*

**29. Ashland FRO Completes Freshwater Mussel Survey for Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation**

*Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO*

**30. Rock Island Biologists Share Endangered Species Information With More Than 1,000 Visitors**

*Rick Nelson, Rock Island Field Office*

**31. Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge Gets New Manager**

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

**32. Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey Completed**

*Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs*

**33. Flex Funds Support Non-game Bird Conservation in Region 3**

*Steve Lewis, Migratory Birds & State Programs*

### Inside Region 3



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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Inside Region 3

*Information from the Accomplishment  
Reporting System*

## Service Proposal Would Grant States More Control of Resident Canada Geese

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing the creation of a new regulation to allow state wildlife management agencies to actively manage populations of resident Canada geese that cause personal and public property damage and, in some cases, pose a threat to public health and safety.

Under the proposed alternative identified in the draft Environmental Impact Statement released Mar. 4, the Service would grant states the authority to undertake approved population control strategies, such as nest and egg destruction, trapping and culling programs, and expanded hunting opportunities.

"The Service believes that the problems caused by resident Canada geese can be best addressed at the state level," said Service Director Steve Williams. "To that end, we are committed to providing state wildlife management agencies with as much flexibility as possible to address the issue."

The draft EIS evaluates a range of alternatives in relation to their ability to reduce and stabilize resident Canada goose populations, reduce conflicts with humans and minimize impacts to property and human health and safety. Aside from the proposed alternative, the EIS analyzes other alternatives, including continuing current management practices unchanged;



-USFWS Photo

Resident (non-migratory) Canada goose populations have continued to grow in many urban areas. The Service has developed a draft Environmental Impact Statement which, if approved, will allow states greater flexibility in managing local populations of resident geese.

## 5,200 Endangered Pallid Sturgeon Arrive at Neosho National Fish Hatchery

Endangered Pallid Sturgeon arrived at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery on Feb. 26, 2002. Rod May (Assistant Manager) and Nick Starzl (Fishery Biologist) travelled to South Dakota and met with staff from the Miles City Montana State Fish Hatchery to transfer the pallids over to Neosho. There are three family lots totalling 5,200 fish. These fish will be reared to nine inches, tagged with pit tags and stocked into the Lower Missouri River as part of recovery efforts.

Neosho's excellent water quality, closed water system, recirculation system and ability to control water temperature, makes it an optimum place to produce endangered pallid sturgeon, as well as other recovery species.

The hatchery has had great success with lake sturgeon production and expects nothing less with the pallids.

This is a cooperative effort with the Columbia Fisheries Resource Office, Columbia Ecological Services Office, Army Corps of Engineers, and the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. *David Hendrix, Neosho NFH*

Continued on next page

*Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes  
accomplishments for the period Feb. 10 - Mar. 8, 2002*

Continued from page 40

## Service Releases Draft EIS on Resident Canada Geese

implementing non-lethal methods such as harassment and habitat management designed to make areas less attractive to geese; expanded hunting opportunities; and creating various depredation orders allowing expanded lethal take of resident geese. A 90-day public comment period on the draft EIS will remain open until May 30, 2002.

Most Canada goose populations are migratory, wintering in the United States and migrating north to summer breeding grounds in the Canadian arctic. But a large availability of habitat, especially in urban and suburban areas where there are park-like open spaces with short grass adjacent to small bodies of water, has resulted in growing numbers of locally-breeding geese that live year round in the lower 48 states.

In temperate climates across the United States, these places provide geese with relatively stable breeding habitat and low numbers of predators. In addition, hunting is usually not allowed in urban and suburban areas, restricting the ability of state and local authorities to control populations using traditional methods. Those resident populations that do migrate often fly only short distances compared to their migratory relatives that breed in Canada. For these reasons, resident Canada goose populations enjoy consistently high reproduction and survival rates.

The Service estimates that there are 3.5 million resident Canada geese in the United States. Resident Canada goose populations in both the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways now exceed 1 million birds each and have increased an average of 14 and 6 percent per year, respectively, over the last 10 years. Indices of resident Canada geese in the Central Flyway

are now approaching 1 million birds and populations in the western portions of the country have shown similar growth rates over the past 10 years.

Resident Canada geese are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and can only be legally taken during a hunting season, unless a special federal permit is obtained from the Service. The Service is in the process of drafting proposed regulations that would authorize the States to implement the proposed alternative and undertake a number of population control and management actions without having to go through the permit process.

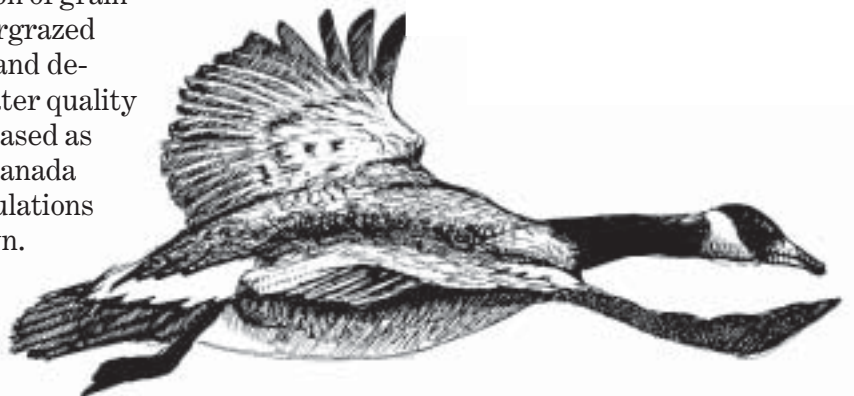
Large flocks of resident Canada geese can denude grassy areas, including parks, pastures, golf courses, lawns, and other landscaped areas where there are ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water nearby. At airports, resident Canada geese have become a significant safety threat, resulting in dangerous takeoff and landing conditions and costly repairs to aircraft. Excessive goose droppings are also a health concern, and have contributed to the temporary closure of public beaches by local health departments in several States. In addition, agricultural and natural resource damage, including depredation of grain crops, overgrazed pastures, and degraded water quality have increased as resident Canada goose populations have grown.

The release of the draft environ-

mental impact statement was announced in the March 1, 2002, Federal Register. The document is the result of a process that began in August 1999. Public input on the alternatives to be considered by the draft environmental impact statement was solicited through Federal Register notices on August 19 and December 30, 1999 and at a series of public meetings held in February and March 2000 across the country.

Written comments concerning the draft EIS should be addressed to the Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, ms 634 ARLSQ, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, D.C., 20240. Copies of the draft EIS are available at the same address or by calling the Service at 703-358-1714.

The Service will schedule public meetings later this year, and the dates and locations will be announced in the Federal Register in March.



- USFWS Illustration by Bob Savannah



## Great Lakes Stations Join Forces to Host Display at Michigan Outdoorama

Eight stations from the Great Lakes Ecosystem hosted a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service display at Outdoorama, held Feb. 22 - Mar. 3, 2002, in Novi, Mich. Outdoorama is the largest event of its kind in the state of Michigan and is sponsored by Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC). Twenty-seven Service employees and four volunteers staffed the display over the 10-day show.

Service exhibits included the East Lansing PLO "Conserving the Nature of America" display and the Ludington Biological Station's fish tank containing lake sturgeon donated by Genoa National Fish Hatchery and lake trout donated by the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery.

An estimated 50,000 people attended the event and many received information about Service programs throughout the Great Lakes area and the upcoming National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial. The

Region 3 blue goose "Puddles" greeted and mingled with children throughout the show and handed out Centennial materials. Children also had an opportunity to decorate their own blue goose to take home or put on display. Another bonus was that the Friends of Shiawassee NWR had their booth next to the FWS one and were able to provide visitors with information on what they can do to help refuges.

Commercial Carpet Corporation (Novi, MI) donated two 10'x10' sections of carpeting and padding to ease wear and tear on the booth workers feet. One of the carpet sections displayed "USFWS" in the center.

Service offices that participated included Ottawa NWR, Shiawassee NWR, Jordan River NFH, Ludington and Marquette Bio. Stations, Alpena FRO, East Lansing PLO and FO.

*Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR and Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO*



-USFWS Photos

A young girl hugs "Puddles" the blue goose (volunteer Tim Rawlings), as Dale Ollila (Marquette Bio. Station) hands out stickers educating the public about the 2003 Refuge Centennial at Outdoorama.



Volunteer Tim Rawlings dressed as "Puddles" the Blue Goose poses with a young boy at the Michigan United Conservation Club sponsored boating and fishing show.



Children "flocked" to the Service display at Outdoorama in Novi, Mich., to decorate a blue goose mobile and add it to the growing goose display. Shiawassee NWR's Park Ranger Michelle VanderHaar helped kids get started. Stations from the Great Lakes Ecosystem hosted the display which included an aquarium with live sturgeon and lake trout.

## Missouri Couple, Arkansas Man Plead Guilty to Illegal Trafficking of Tigers

Three individuals indicted on federal wildlife charges last November entered guilty pleas Monday in federal court in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Todd H. Lantz, owner of Lazy L Exotics in Cape Girardeau, his wife Vicki L. Lantz and Freddy M Wilmoth of Gentry, Ark., pleaded guilty to conspiracy and Endangered Species Act charges for illegally trafficking of four endangered tigers in 1998.

Todd H. Lantz of Cape Girardeau, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act, a felony. The maximum penalty for conspiring to violate the Lacey Act, a federal wildlife protection law, is five years in prison and/or fines of up to \$250,000. Vicki L. Lantz, pleaded guilty to aiding in the sale of the four tigers, a misdemeanor violation of the Endangered Species Act. Freddy M. Wilmoth pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the transportation of an endangered species into commerce, also a misdemeanor violation of the Endangered Species Act. The maximum penalty for misdemeanor violations of the Endangered Species Act is one year confinement and/or fines up to \$100,000.

Sentencing for all three defendants is scheduled for May 20.

The three are among five individuals indicted for their roles in the

illegal trafficking of six endangered tigers and five leopards protected by federal law. The indictments were unsealed Nov. 8, 2001 by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri in St. Louis following a lengthy undercover investigation by agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The five were alleged to have illegally purchased, transported and sold federally-endangered tigers and leopards between January and August 1998. The indictments alleged that in February 1998, Todd Lantz, purchased four tigers from Freddy Wilmoth in Gentry, Ark., and transported them to the 5H Ranch in Cape Girardeau, Mo., with the knowledge the tigers were to be killed. After the tigers were killed and sold, Vicky Lantz prepared federal forms (USDA Form 720) falsely stating the transaction was a donation.

No hearing dates have been set for Stoney Elam of Fort Gibson, Okla., and Tim Rivers of Citra, Fla., the two others charged in the indictments. Indictments allege that in June 1998, Stoney Elam sold two tigers and three leopards in violation of federal wildlife laws. Timothy Rivers, owner of Animals in Motion in Citra, Fla., is alleged to have illegally sold two leopards in August 1998.

Service investigators, working closely with the U.S. Attorney's Offices in Missouri, Illinois and Michigan, uncovered a group of residents and small business owners in the Midwest that allegedly bought and killed exotic tigers, leopards, snow leopards, lions, mountain lions, cougars, mixed breed cats and black bears with the intention of introducing meat and skins into the lucrative animal parts trade. Tigers and snow leopards are listed as "Endangered" under the federal Endangered Species Act. The law also protects leopards, which are classified as either "endangered" or "threatened" depending on the location of the wild population. Although federal regulations allow possession of captive-bred tigers, the regulations stipulate activities involving their use must be to enhance the propagation or survival of the species. It is unlawful to kill the animals for profit, or to sell their hides, parts or meats into interstate commerce.

Service agents were also assisted in the Missouri investigation by law enforcement officers from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

*Scott Flaherty,  
External Affairs*

## Seney National Wildlife Refuge Kicks off Snowy Centennial Celebration

The 11th annual Snowfest at Seney National Wildlife Refuge attracted the largest-ever attendance for the event. The Seney Natural History Association partnered with the refuge to make this year's Snowfest a special centennial celebration. Refuge staff estimate that over 800 visitors attended this year, up from a previous high of 350.

Among the highlights of this year's event were the caribou - 244 people

were able to take a caribou-drawn sleigh ride and learn about woodland caribou, which historically migrated to Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Dog sled rides were also offered and refuge volunteers checked out 148 pairs of snowshoes, on loan from Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the Hiawatha National Forest.

Event fliers, a regional display, and films (on the NWRS, Pelican Island,

and refuges in Hawaii and Alaska) all helped carry the message of the Centennial to visitors throughout the day. Two radio interviews and numerous print press releases and interviews broadcasted the message beyond refuge borders. *Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR*



## Habitat and Public Use Improvements Completed at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge

On Feb. 21, 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service accepted two completed construction projects at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge. The first project, a 14,000 gallon-per-minute pumping station, will enhance habitat on the 250 acre Gilbert Lake. The second project, also at Gilbert Lake, is a new parking lot designed to address the increased public use this area has experienced in recent years.

The Gilbert Lake Division is 735 acres of backwaters and floodplain forest in Jersey County, Ill. Located just four river miles upstream of the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, the 250-acre Gilbert Lake provides resting and feeding habitat for migrating birds as well as resident wildlife in the heart of the Mississippi Flyway. The new pump station and water control structure will enable refuge staff to more closely mimic the annual flood cycle

of the Illinois River. Annual plant production and water levels suitable for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds can be more closely controlled.

Gilbert Lake also received a new 10-acre parking lot that addresses a long-standing access problem for refuge visitors.

Prior to the new lot, visitors had to park at nearby Pere Marquette State Park and walk up to three miles to fish in the lake. The other, more common approach, was to park along a busy state highway, often backing into traffic upon leaving. This new parking lot provides a safe, convenient place for refuge visitors to enjoy fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation on the entire 735-acre Gilbert Lake Division. *Russell Engelke, Two Rivers NWR*

### New Refuges on the River?

Some particularly observant individuals may have noticed a few new national wildlife refuges along the Mississippi River in parts of Iowa, Illinois and Missouri. These new refuges are actually the former districts of the Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

The new refuge names are:

**Great River NWR** (formerly Annada District)

**Two Rivers NWR** (formerly Brussels District)

**Port Louisa NWR** (formerly Wapello District)

**Middle Mississippi River NWR**, also part of Mark Twain Complex, is currently unstaffed and has little management activity.

## Centennial Event Honors Horicon National Wildlife Refuge Volunteers

More than 50 people joined together on Feb. 28 to celebrate the many wonderful accomplishments of refuge volunteers in 2001.

A grand total of 259 people volunteered 4,815 hours in 2001 at a monetary value to the refuge of \$43,990.

Ranger Molly Stoddard entertained and educated volunteers with her "Countdown to the Centennial" program, featuring the Refuge System video, playing "Find the Refuge" using maps, and counting down the Top 10 reasons why we should care about refuges and the Centennial. Other events included the premiere showing of the new Horicon video.

Dan Bell, Terri Fuller, and Betty Flesch were honored with certificates of appreciation for their initiative and leadership in starting the Friends of Horicon NWR and serving as the first officers.

Harold and Nancy Steinback were named volunteers of the year. They worked a combined total of 216 hours. Their combined lifetime hours

total 512 hours since 1998.

Our first virtual volunteer, Kevin McIver of Florida, was named the individual who worked the most hours and was thanked via a surprise telephone call broadcast over the speaker. He worked 205 hours as our webmaster and newsletter writer.

Once again, the Beaver Dam Charter School was named the group that worked the most hours. A total of 88 people worked 1,529 hours, which means they set a new record once again! Local media attended and provided coverage of this event. *Molly Stoddard, Horicon NWR*



-USFWS Photo

Ranger Molly Stoddard with Harold and Nancy Steinback, Horicon's Volunteers of the Year

## Higgins' Eye Mussel Recovery Team Prepares for Spring Season

Members of the interagency Endangered Higgins' eye Mussel Recovery Team recently gathered at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in a cooperative effort to assist station personnel in assembling host fish cages. Team members from several U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices and the states of Illinois and Minnesota worked together to frame and wire the cages.

These cages are vital to the Higgins' eye mussel recovery effort, as they will be the temporary homes for host fish that will be placed into the Mississippi River and its larger tributaries. These rivers are part of the historic range of Higgins' eye Pearlymussel and have been selected as part of a long-term restoration effort by state and federal agencies.

The fish will be artificially infested this spring with larval mussels which attach and parasitize their gills. Young mussels require a fish host to supply them food in their early life stages, until they are developed enough to drop off to the riverbed

and feed on their own. These fish also supply a free ride to the young mussels, to ensure some are dispersed over a wide range of available habitats.

Results from this year's program will be evaluated in the fall of 2002 when the cages are removed and juvenile Higgins' eyes are harvested by project personnel.

Results from initial operations carried out in the summer of 2001 show promise with hundreds of juvenile mussels produced from four assessed cages.

Higgins' eye mussels are on the Federal Endangered Species List, as they have been eliminated and suffered significant population reductions over a large part of their native range. Some of the factors leading to their decline are, zebra mussel infestations on adult mussels, changes in suitable habitats, and marginal water quality due to pollution, and siltation.

*Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH*

## Ground-Nesting Bird Workshop Held

The Minnesota Waterfowl Association in cooperation with Region 3 of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducted a two-day workshop which updated participants on the current state of knowledge about the impacts of predation on ground-nesting birds and the effectiveness of various predator management techniques.

Over 115 state, federal, and private organization biologists attended the workshop. The general conclusion was that predator management is not a substitute for habitat protection and management, but it can increase nesting success in situations where habitat is good but nesting success is at unacceptably low levels due to predation. It remains unclear how the majority of society views predator removal for the purpose of enhancing populations of hunted species. *Steve Wilds, Migratory Birds & State Pgm*

## Grassland Improvement Program at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge is For the Birds

Horicon NWR is removing fence line trees from upland sites in an ongoing effort to improve grassland habitat.

In January 2002, a total of 3,731 linear feet of fence line trees were removed. The fence line trees create barriers between grassland fields and between the grasslands and marsh areas, fragmenting habitat for nesting upland birds.

Many grassland birds prefer larger continuous blocks for nest-

ing. In addition, the wooded fence lines create habitat for predators and brown-headed cowbirds which in turn decrease nesting success for grassland birds.

The trees were piled and have been sold as firewood.

*Diane Penttila, Horicon NWR*

Grassland birds such as the goldfinch will benefit from the habitat management at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

- USFWS Illustration by Louis Fuertes





## Rydell National Wildlife Refuge Ready for People and Wildlife

Rydell National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Minnesota recently completed two projects that has the refuge ready for 2002.

Staff and volunteers from the University of Minnesota at Crookston have completed the review and maintenance of existing waterfowl nest structures located on the refuge. "New" grass was installed in all the over water waterfowl nest structure and the 150 nesting boxes were inspected and additional wood chips were installed as necessary. Data on use will be compiled at a later date.

A new addition was also completed at the refuge's visitor center. The addition provides two large restroom facilities for public use, a small storage area, and a small kitchenette area for use when serving refreshments at programs. The newly expanded restrooms replace the single unisex restroom. The new storage room allows us to remove the extra chairs and tables for the visitors center area, greatly increasing our display area potential. With the new room now available, our Friends Association has initiated a contract with a local taxidermist for nine mounts for display in the center, including a bobcat and a fisher.

*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

## Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Opens Its Doors To Snowmobilers

This is the first year that the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery in Elmira, Mich., has officially opened its' doors to snowmobilers. The hatchery is located in the middle of the Jordan River Valley, right along the Jordan River snowmobile trail. In cooperation with the local snowmobile clubs, signs were placed on the trail leading to the hatchery, a section of the fence was removed, and part of the parking lot was left unplowed for sleds.

The visitors center, hot beverage center and restrooms are open 24 hours a day for snowmobilers. Hot cocoa, tea and coffee was donated by local businesses, snowmobile clubs and hatchery staff.

Over 1,000 packets of hot cocoa were donated by the East Jordan Snowmobile Club and the Boyne City Glen's Market. Recently the hatchery also received a \$100

donation from the Charlevoix Snowmobile Club for the beverage center.

The hatchery's visitor center log book is full of "thank you's," "great idea" and other comments of support for opening the hatchery for snowmobilers. It is estimated 1,000 snowmobilers have visited the hatchery since late December 2001, most of whom would have not otherwise stopped at the hatchery.

The hatchery is using this opportunity to educate visitors about the mission of the hatchery and the Service. In addition, during normal hours, tours are available which highlight the Service's lake trout restoration efforts in the Great Lakes. *Clarice Beckner, Jordan River NFH*

## Blue Goose Gets a Face-Lift to Celebrate 99th Birthday

Thanks to Seney NWR Maintenance Worker Terry Papple, the Blue Goose is once again looking good and flying high over Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Papple, who has worked on the refuge since 1971, originally constructed the over-sized blue goose wooden templates early in his career. He designed them to fit on all four sides of a fire tower that stands next to the Refuge Headquarters.

Back in the 1970's, Papple didn't think of what he did as anything special. He says it was "...just something we did - like putting up signs - no big thing."

In honor of the upcoming National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial, Papple spruced up the tower geese by giving them a new blue and white paint job. Temporary Bio. Tech. Josh Martindale gave him a hand when it was time to put the geese back up in the air. *Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR*



*-USFWS Photo*

The blue goose, symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System, flies proudly over Seney NWR, thanks to Refuge Maintenance Worker Terry Papple and Bio. Tech. Josh Martindale

## Outreach Planning Continues for Wolf Reclassification



-USFWS Photo

The Service will soon issue a final decision on the proposal to reclassify gray wolf populations.

Region 3 is currently drafting a final rule that will explain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision on the various actions that were proposed in our July 2000 proposal to reclassify and delist the gray wolf. The draft will need concurrence from all the affected regions (regions 1-6) and the final decision will be made by the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife.

An outreach plan and all outreach materials must be reviewed and approved along with the final rule. Region 3 has lead responsibility for coordinating the outreach package.

Based on the decisions recommended in the draft final rule, a draft outreach plan has been developed

and circulated to other regions involved in the reclassification.

Follow-up information on the planning effort, including a map and draft summary of the final rule, have also been distributed to other regions to help with their efforts in updating outreach materials.

The development of useful and accurate outreach materials, which clearly explain the Service's intentions to the public and our partners, are critical to the successful announcement of decisions.

*Georgia Parham, External Affairs*

## Northern Wisconsin Wetland Team - Habitat Restoration Partnership

The 2001 field season was another successful year for the Northern Wisconsin Wetland Team. Twenty-two wetland and stream projects were completed in the four county region consisting of Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Iron counties, all of which border Lake Superior.

The Northern Wisconsin Wetland Team is a multi-agency partnership which began in 1997 with an operational agreement between the counties, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Ashland Field Office and the US Fish and Wildlife Service - Ashland Fishery Resources Office. Ducks Unlimited joined later with restoration project financial assistance.

This successful partnership implements long range wetland, riparian and stream habitat development programs. Each organization remains independent and has its own responsibilities, but has recognized the need and desire to coordinate as

a local, state and federal partnership for effective delivery of fish and wildlife habitat development.

The partnership area consists of some of the most unique wetland systems in the United States.

One example is the 16,000-acre Kakagon Slough, the largest estuary system remaining in the upper Great Lakes. It has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Species such as grey wolves, bald eagles, American black ducks and coaster brook trout rely on the region's wetland, stream and riparian areas for their survival.

Project evaluation and planning is underway for the 2002 field season with many new and exciting projects. Specific areas in which the team is taking a special interest for the upcoming season are woodland and ephemeral wetland restoration. These historically important sites host an amazing variety of wildlife including the four-toed salamander

and pickerel frog which are Wisconsin species of special concern. With these and other wetland, riparian and stream projects falling into place, the partners look forward to another successful field season of fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects. *Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*



-USFWS Photo

The team's King/Coda Project involved three agencies and resulted in six acres of restored and protected wildlife habitat.



## Cooperative Habitat Project is a Boost for Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife

The first phase of construction on a Mississippi River habitat project designed to benefit migratory birds, fish and water quality is completed. This project is located on several islands that make up the Long Island Division of the Great River National Wildlife Refuge just a few miles north of Quincy, Ill. The project is a cooperative effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the refuge, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

This group of islands provides important habitat for many species of birds that migrate along the river each spring and fall. Almost 5,900 acres of this island complex is comprised of mature bottomland forest, making this one of the largest and most important forested areas along the Mississippi River south of the Quad Cities. The islands also provide important fish habitat by slowing and creating eddies in the river current.

Many fish use these areas for spawning, feeding or resting. The small channels between many of these islands, with their deep water and reduced current, also provide critical winter habitat for fish. All of these important habitat values have been continually declining for many decades due to bankline erosion that results in the loss of trees and



-USFWS Photo

Several projects at Great River NWR (formerly Annada District of the Mark Twain NWR) will help protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat near Quincy, Ill.

threatens to completely destroy many small islands. Associated sedimentation has resulted in the loss of many deep water areas.

During the first year of work, five small islands were protected from further erosion by placing a layer of heavy rock along their upstream banks. Second, to provide slow, deep water for fish during the critical winter months, a 6,000-foot-long, six-foot deep channel was dredged in O'Dell Chute between Long Island and Flannigan Island. To protect this channel from heavy sedimentation, a rock closing structure, similar to a low dam, was constructed across the upstream mouth of the channel. This structure should reduce the amount of sand and other sediments

that enters the channel.

Finally, 20 acres of young trees were planted in the last remaining field on Long Island. The types of trees were carefully selected for their high value to wildlife. A new method of growing these young trees has been developed which allows them to grow much faster and produce nuts and fruits after just a few year's growth. Over the next two years, an additional 40 acres of trees will be planted. Together, these measures will help protect and restore very important river habitats for fish and for birds on the Great River National Wildlife Refuge.

*Dave Ellis, Great River NWR*

## Mingo Maintenance Staff Lends a Hand to Corps of Engineers Project

The Mingo National Wildlife Refuge maintenance staff assisted the Lake Wappapello U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff clean and repair their spillway on Mar. 6 - 7.

Bulldozers and back-hoes were first lowered down the spill-way's steep walls. Once in the bottom of the spill-way, boulders and rocks were rearranged or removed for

better water flow. The Corps completed safety checks and cement repair. The project took two full days. When completed, the heavy equipment had to be "lifted" back out. Mingo Heavy Equipment Operators, Doug Siler and Rudy Williams, guided and pulled the bulldozers and back-hoes straight up the spill-way banks using other heavy equipment and

dump trucks. Maintenance Mechanic Ray Placher oversaw the operation, ensuring safety and checking cables.

A team effort between the Corps and the refuge made the project possible. Both the Refuge and the Corps look forward to being able to call upon each other for help in the future. *Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR*

## Shiawassee Refuge Hosts Workshop for Local Nature Center Staff

Chippewa Nature Center, located in Midland, Mich., recently contacted the staff at Green Point Environmental Learning Center (part of the Shiawassee NWR) to set up a workshop for their staff. The goal of this workshop was to expose nature center employees to all that Shiawassee NWR has to offer.

Visitors to the Chippewa Nature Center often ask what opportunities the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge offers. However, only a few

staff from the nature center have actually visited the refuge and most times all they had to offer was a brochure.

On Feb. 20, 2002, 28 staff members from the nature center attended a workshop designed to help solve this problem. Secretaries, maintenance workers, naturalists and volunteers made up the group. In the morning, four refuge staff people provided guided tours of the refuge. In the afternoon, the nature center staff could choose between sessions

dealing with visitor services or biological issues.

Refuge staff received many positive comments about the workshop. Chippewa Nature Center staff were impressed with our ecosystem management and the amount of outreach we do with such a small staff. It was a very worthwhile workshop for all involved.

*Becky Goche Shiawassee NWR*

## Accomplishment Reports Received

The following reports were processed by the Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System for accomplishments completed between Feb. 10 and Mar. 8, 2002. Employees can search reports using the Report Manager utility in the ARS.

Web Page Presentation for the MH/TGP Ecosystem Team

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Ashland FRO uses publication to provide technical information for tribal hatcheries

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Mussel Recovery Team assembles host fish cages for spring season

*Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH*

Diversity Report

*Dale Bast, Iron River NFH*

Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Volunteer Programs Scores

*Clarice Beckner, Jordan River NFH*

Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Opens Its Doors To Snowmobilers

*Clarice Beckner, Jordan River NFH*

Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Tank Room Gets Needed Improvements

*Clarice Beckner, Jordan River NFH*

Northern Wisconsin Wetland Team - An Established and Successful Habitat Restoration Partnership

*Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*

Missouri Couple, Arkansas Man Plead Guilty to Illegal Trafficking of Tigers

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team to meet in the Bahamas

*Mike DeCapita, East Lansing FO*

Grassland Improvement Program at Horicon NWR is For the Birds

*Diane Penttila, Horicon NWR*

Hydropower Project Gathering Strengthens Federal/State Partnerships

*Laura Ragan, External Affairs*

Habitat and Public Use Improvements at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge

*Russell Engelke, Two Rivers NWR*

Service partners with Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to assess walleye populations

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Outreach Planning-Wolf Reclassification

*Georgia Parham, External Affairs*

Shiawassee NWR Hosts Workshop for Local Nature Center Staff

*Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR*

Predation and Ground-nesting Birds Workshop Held

*Steve Wilds, Migratory Birds & State Pgm*

National Conference Nets Tangible Results

*Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Restoration Project Ideas Generated for Kalamazoo River

*Lisa Williams, East Lansing FO*

Detroit Lakes WMD Develops Plant Taxonomic Key for 4th Graders

*Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

Significance of waterbird bycatch in the Midwest assessed

*Bob Russell, Migratory Birds & State Pgm*

Great Backyard Bird Count at DeSoto Refuge

*Cindy Myer, Desoto NWR*

DeSoto Refuge Honors Its Volunteers

*Cindy Myer, Desoto NWR*

Annual Career Day for Northland College Students

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*



Region Begins Student Recruitment Effort at UW-Stevens Point  
*Dan Stinnett, Twin Cities FO*

Green Bay FRO Biologist nominated to serve on Great Lakes Fishery Commission Review Panel  
*Charles Bronte, Green Bay FRO*

Federal Aid Project Leaders Training in Illinois  
*Mike Sweet, Federal Aid*

A Boost for Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife  
*Dave Ellis, Great River NWR*

Local Service Activities and Opportunities Highlighted at La Crosse Outdoors Show  
*Mark Steingraeber, LaCrosse FRO*

Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge adds 140 acres  
*Cathy Henry, UMRNW&FR-McGregor Dist.*

East Lansing Field Office Expands Recruitment Efforts  
*Christopher Mensing, East Lansing FO*

East Lansing Field Office participates in College Jobs Fair  
*Barbara Hosler, East Lansing FO*  
Budget Tracking System  
*William Andersen, ABA (Budget & Finance)*

Ashland FRO Fish Passage Initiatives  
*Lee Newman, Ashland FRO*

La Crosse FRO and UMR Refuge - La Crosse District host volunteer banquet  
*Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO*

Ongoing Ruffe Winter Diet Study  
*Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO*

Endangered Pallid Sturgeon Arrive at the Neosho Hatchery  
*David Hendrix, Neosho NFH*

Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem team has successful meeting  
*Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO*

Rydell Visitor Center Addition Ready to Use  
*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Michigan State Students Learn about the Service  
*Christopher Mensing, East Lansing FO*

Budget and Finance Office Updates Information on Intranet  
*William Andersen, ABA (Budget & Finance)*

Minnesota Valley NWR Recruits for Summer Temporary Positions  
*Tom Kerr, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Sherburne NWR Participates in Land-owners Workshop  
*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

Great Lakes Stations Host Display at Michigan Outdoorama  
*Becky Goche, Shianwassee NWR*

Service Stations Join Forces for Outdoorama  
*Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO*

Service Releases Draft EIS on Resident Canada Geese  
*Chuck Traxler, External Affairs*

DL WMD's Long-standing Easement Case is One Step Closer to Resolution  
*Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

Sherburne and Crane Meadows Refuge Volunteers Honored  
*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

CSG Customer Service Survey implemented  
*John Herron, ABA (CSG)*

Credit Card Program  
*William Andersen, ABA (Budget & Finance)*

Ashland FRO Web Page Updated  
*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Rydell Refuge Nest Structures Revitalized for the 2002 Nesting Season  
*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Mingo Maintenance Staff Lends a Hand to the Neighboring U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project  
*Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR*

New Hunter Education Grant approved for Minnesota  
*Julie Morin, Federal Aid*



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Region 3  
Office of External Affairs  
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Inside Region 3

*Information from the Accomplishment  
Reporting System*

## Blue Goose Lands in Washington for 99th Birthday Celebration

The week of March 11-15 was filled with a flurry of activities in Washington, DC, involving Region 3 outreach specialists, regional refuge chiefs and supervisors. The week's activities not only served to celebrate Refuges' 99th birthday on Mar. 14, but brought added visibility and support to the National Wildlife Refuge System and its upcoming Centennial.

Scott Flaherty and Chuck Traxler of the Region 3 External Affairs Office joined representatives from other Service regions to brief regional Centennial accomplishments, plans and activities to refuge chiefs and supervisors on Mar. 12. The chiefs' update was part of the national outreach team's meeting in Washington. In addition to the briefing, the team discussed action on national centennial efforts, including adoption and approval of a new refuge system logo for use with Centennial printed materials, a \$2.5 million Refuge System exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and updates on national exhibits and media campaigns.

The meetings of the outreach team and refuge chiefs and supervisors coincided with the first meeting of the 10 member Centennial Commission. The commission was established by the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act and includes in its membership former Service Director Lynn Greenwalt, former Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks William P. Horn, basketball star Carl Malone, Naturalist Jack Hannah,



- USFWS Photo by Chuck Traxler

Region 3 Refuge Chief Nita Fuller and Refuge Supervisors Don Hultman, Jon Kauffeld and Jim Leach (not pictured) briefed Region 3 congressional members in Washington, D.C., on the System's 99th birthday.

host of television's "Jack Hannah's Animal Adventures," Daniel Pedrotti, past president of "Boone and Crockett," Kym Murphy, vice president of environmental policy with the Disney Corporation, John L. Morris, founder and owner of BassPro Shops, Peter Coors, chief executive officer of Coors Brewing Company, Ramona Seeligson Bass, Director of the Texas Wildlife Campaign and Michael Bean, senior attorney and chair for wildlife programs at Environmental Defense.

It's clear from the briefing that the Region's have taken the lead in planning and executing Centennial

projects nationwide.

More than 400 distinguished guests, including many Members of Congress, Centennial Commission members and regional representatives celebrated the Refuge System on the eve of its 99th birthday during a reception at the National Botanical Garden near the U.S. Capitol. Secretary of Interior Gail Norton and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams hosted the reception. Both leaders

**Continued on next page**

*Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes  
accomplishments for the period Mar. 8 - Mar. 25, 2002*



Continued from previous page

## Refuge System's 99th Birthday Celebration

addressed the assembled guests, delivering strong messages of support for the Refuge system. Bill Horn, chairman of the Centennial Commission, introduced attending commission members. All but three members of the Commission were present.

The day following the reception, regional refuge supervisors continued their visits with congressional delegations from Midwest states. External Affairs supplied each Region 3 refuge supervisor with refuge information packets containing locally produced fact sheets on the Region, the System and the Centennial. The packets were delivered by the supervisors to congressional staff during each visit. Supervisors reported good support for

regional refuges among the delegations. More than 32 congressional staff visits were accomplished during the week, including some visits by Gerry Jackson, Fisheries Program ARD and Charlie Wooley, Ecological Services ARD.

The projects and accomplishments of each region and national teams will be highlighted in an upcoming issue of 'News and Views' to

be published later in April.

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*



-USFWS Photo

Service Director Steve Williams (front row, fourth from left) helped the National Centennial Outreach Team promote the System's upcoming Centennial celebration at a congressional reception held on Mar. 13.

## Engineering Award Honors Innovative Project on the Upper Mississippi Refuge

The Stoddard Islands Environmental Management Program (EMP) Habitat Rehabilitation Project, located within the La Crosse District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge,



-USFWS photo by Lara Hill

Jim Nissen (Left) La Crosse District Manager and Project Engineer Keith Beseke were presented with the "Seven Wonders of Engineering" Award for their Stoddard Islands EMP Project.

were awarded the Seven Wonders of Engineering Award at the National Engineers Banquet held recently.

The Stoddard Island Project recreates the islands lost due to wind and wave action in the Upper Mississippi River (lower Pool 8). Island loss in this area is a serious problem contributing to widespread fish and wildlife habitat loss.

The Stoddard Island Project has been exceptionally successful in recreating the aquatic vegetation in the area, which has vastly improved fishing and waterfowl use in the area. Keith Beseke, Project Engineer (USFWS) said, "We saw results the first year after the project was completed. We were seeing the habitat reverting back to 1950's conditions. There is no better way to explain it than looking at the images from 1961, 1994 and 2000. You can clearly see the results."

This project is a cooperative effort between biologists in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Seven Wonders of Engineering Awards competition is conducted annually to recognize outstanding achievements in the field of engineering. The program is designed to acknowledge and publicly recognize those organizations that have advanced the profession and prestige of the entire engineering community.

The project was judged based on the engineering expertise involved, the scope of the project, the significance of the project's contribution to society, the uniqueness of the project and the quality of the entry materials. *Lara Hill, Upper Mississippi River NWFR*

## Region 3 Partners Receive \$4.8 Million for Habitat Projects

On Mar. 14, 2002, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved funding for five North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants in Region 3. The grant projects are located in the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture and the eastern portion of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.

The projects are funded under the NAWCA Standard Grants Program with matching contributions made by state, federal and non-governmental partnerships.

The acquisition, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat will advance the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in both the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region and Prairie Pothole Joint Ventures.



- Photo courtesy of Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Navarre Marsh on Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, a Lake Erie coastal wetland enhancement site in the Northwest Ohio Wetlands Initiative NAWCA Grant Project.

### The projects are:

**1. Glacial Habitat Restoration Area Phase IV, Wisconsin:** The acquisition, restoration and enhancement of 3,494 acres of wildlife habitat will occur in four counties of Wisconsin. This proposal is part of a larger effort to restore wildlife habitat in an area identified as the Glacial Habitat Restoration Area. Long term protection will be provided to 812 acres of wetlands and 2,682 acres of upland. The grant is for \$1 million with partners contributing \$2,133,280. The grantee is Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**2. Lewis and Clark Floodplain Heritage Partnership Phase I, Missouri:** Seventy-seven counties in Missouri have been identified as potential sites for this project. Conservation easements will provide long-term protection to 11,719 acres of wildlife habitat being acquired, restored or enhanced. This endeavor will restore floodplain habitat along

the Missouri River and depressional wetlands and uplands within the watershed of the Missouri River. The grant is for \$1 million with partners contributing \$5,794,022. The grantee is Wildlife Forever.

**3. Northwest Ohio Wetlands Initiative:** Habitat acquisition, restoration and enhancement activities will occur in seven counties in northwest Ohio. This is the first large scale habitat effort in this region of Ohio. A total of 3,052 acres of wetland and upland habitat will receive long term protection. The grant is for \$1 million with partners contributing \$5,376,348. The grantee is Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**4. Centennial Pothole Venture, Minnesota:** Twenty-three counties of Minnesota have been targeted as potential areas for wildlife habitat acquisition, restoration and enhancement activities. Conservation easements placed on 6,843.5 acres of

habitat will provide migratory birds with a variety of migration and breeding habitat types. The grant is for \$1 million with partners contributing \$6,183,715. The grantee is Pheasants Forever.

**5. Comprehensive Bird Conservation in the Red River of the North Watershed, Minnesota:** Eleven counties in Minnesota have been targeted as potential sites for acquiring, restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat. When completed, 3,593.5 acres of wetland and upland habitats will be protected with long term conservation easements. This project is also recognized as providing downstream flood damage reduction benefits. The grant is for \$798,335 with partners contributing \$2,189,598. The grantee is National Audubon Society. *Paul Richert, Migratory Birds and State Programs*



## Service to Establish Management Office at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced that it will operate an on-site planning and management office at the new Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in southeast Michigan. The office will allow the Service to oversee its comprehensive conservation planning (CCP) for the new refuge. The international refuge will conserve, protect and restore habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 65 kinds of fish and 300 species of migratory birds on more than 5,000 acres along the lower Detroit River in Michigan and Canada.

No specific date for the opening of the office has been set, but Service officials expect the office to be operating sometime this summer. Doug Spencer, currently the Service's refuge manager at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in north central Michigan, will serve as interim manager at the Detroit River refuge.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge was created in December 2001, and is the first international refuge in North America. The refuge is a result of an unprecedented partnership of government agencies, businesses, conservation groups, landowners and private citizens on both sides of the border. The refuge is also a key component of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, a community-based program that seeks to build "green" infrastructure and create outdoor recreational opportunities in Wayne County, Michigan. The public-private partnership gained momentum over the past year through a series of cooperative agreements, land exchanges and acquisitions involving governments,

private businesses, citizens and conservation groups.

"As managers of the refuge, we will reach out and engage partners and citizens and involve them in the planning process to help us plot conservation and recreation decisions for the future of the refuge," said Spencer. "As a new member of the National Wildlife Refuge System, it is our policy to make areas of this refuge open to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and environmental interpretation."

The Lower Detroit River contains shipping channels, shoals and islands that serve as habitat for numerous fish and wildlife. Located at the intersection of the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, an estimated three million ducks, geese, swans and coots migrate annually through the region. More than 300,000 diving ducks stop each year to feed on wild celery beds in the river. The Canada-United States North American Waterfowl Management Plan has identified the Detroit River as one of 34 waterfowl habitat areas of major concern in the U.S. and Canada. (Lower Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin).

The Detroit River is also known for its duck hunting and fishing, activities the Service plans to continue on parts of the refuge.

"Among our goals is to establish plans that proved ample opportunities for hunting and fishing while incorporating refuge goals and conserving habitat," Spencer said. "Long-term, restoring habitat on refuge land will benefit hunters and fishers all along the river." *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*



- USFWS photo by Rick Julian

A young girl puts nesting material into a new wood duck house she built at Rydell NWR.

## Seventy Wood Duck Houses Find New Homes

With snow still covering the ground on Mar. 23, 57 visitors to Rydell National Wildlife Refuge constructed wood duck boxes for placement by local lakes, ponds and rivers. Visitors from over 100 miles away participated in the construction project. A temperature in the high 20s, a bright sun and light winds helped make the outdoor activities more enjoyable.

After the construction activities a number of visitors took time to hike the trails, take some pictures and enjoy the refuge. Many also visited the new addition on the Visitor's Center and sampled cookies, hot cider, coffee and hot chocolate provided by the Friends of Rydell Refuge Association.

Wood for the boxes was supplies by the Cormorant Lakes Sportsmen Club, the Minnesota DNR and the refuge. Volunteers and staff spent over 100 hours cutting out all the box parts. Many additional boxes were build by the volunteers who came to help. These boxes will find homes on the refuge or with visitors this spring. Twenty "kits" will be available for the bluebird box program in April. *Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

## Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Nest Basket Program a Success

Recently completed maintenance and nesting success surveys of the nesting baskets in the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District indicated that 65 percent of the baskets successfully produced mallard or Canada goose broods in 2001. The cone shaped nesting baskets were placed in wetlands on Waterfowl Production Areas throughout the district during the past decade to provide nesting sites for mallards.

A total of 130 baskets were available for nesting during the spring and summer of 2001. Of these, 64 were successfully used by mallards to produce ducklings and 29 nest baskets were successfully used by Canada geese to produce goslings. Six of the baskets were used by mallards to produce double clutches and two baskets were used by both mallards and Canada geese to successfully produce clutches. Successful mallard production in nest baskets increased steadily during the early 1990's on the Detroit Lakes WMD and has main-

tained an average of nearly 63 percent nesting success during the past five years.

There was no evidence of nest predation in any of the baskets. Abandoned mallard nests were found in four of the unsuccessful baskets and abandoned Canada goose nests were found in four other unsuccessful baskets. This abandonment rate (six percent) was significantly lower than the 18 percent abandonment rate that occurred in 2000.

According to the Fergus Falls Habitat and Population Evaluation



-USFWS Photo

Refuge Operations Specialist Larry Hanson replaces straw in a nesting basket and checks for evidence of successful waterfowl production.

Team, more than 10 percent of the mallard production in the district now comes from nesting baskets. *Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

## Historical Museum Invasive Species Display Helps Educate Public



- USFWS Photo

Sea Lamprey are one of the invasive species the Service provided the Bay County Museum for an educational display.

The Alpena Fishery Resources Office provided aquatic invasive species for a display in the Maritime Exhibit at the Historical Museum of Bay County in Bay City, Mich.

Species provided for display included sea lamprey, Eurasian ruffe, round goby, zebra mussels and rusty crayfish; all of which are found in nearby Lake Huron.

The exhibit, titled "Bay City: Sea Port to the World" features the ecology and history of the Saginaw River. The display will be part of the "Uses and abuses of the Saginaw River" program that focuses on reaching students and will run

during April and May 2002, then become a permanent part of the museum's collection.

The museum receives approximately 60,000 visitors annually for special events. Fishery Biologist Anjanette Bowen met with volunteers who will be staffing the exhibit to provide information on the invasives.

Public education is an important means of preventing the spread of invasive species. *Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*



## Cost-Share Program Provides More Than \$3 million for Fish and Wildlife

At least 138 projects valued at more than \$3 million will be conducted through the Service Challenge Cost-Share Program by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during Fiscal Year 2002 in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region.

All 138 projects being carried out by the Service are in cooperation with hundreds of local, state and regional partners.

Conducted since 1988, the program has successfully leveraged federal funds with non-federal dollars and in-kind services to cost-share projects that support fish and wildlife conservation on Service, non-federal, private and tribal lands.

During Fiscal Year 2002, Region 3 is providing funds valued at almost \$545,000 and partners have pledged more than \$2.5 million. Total expenditures for the 138 projects are likely to exceed \$3.1 million. Approximately 150 wetland acres and 1,100 upland acres will be restored.

More than \$103,000 of Service funds will cost share 37 projects on National Wildlife Refuge System lands. Additionally, the Service is providing more than \$79,000 for Centennial projects to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the System in March 2003.

Twenty-five projects to enhance recreational fishing opportunities on national wildlife refuges will receive Service funds amounting to almost \$104,000, while ecosystem teams will carry out 15 projects with cost share assistance of more than \$95,000.

Additionally, 22 projects will cost-share the restoration of wetlands and other unique upland habitats, including native prairies, oak savannas, bottomland hardwoods, coastal marshes, rare fens and important riparian areas. These projects, which received \$90,000, will restore and enhance habitats for trust species, including endangered and threatened fish and wildlife.

The cooperative projects will also: purchase equipment and/or supplies for habitat projects; conduct fish and wildlife research; maintain and improve Service facilities; enhance hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, hiking, photographic and other recreational opportunities on Service lands for all visitors; sustain diverse self guided interpretive programs; and improve environmental education and outreach.

Since its beginning, the program's success has resulted from the timely generosity of partners, who have contributed funds at a 76:24 ratio. From 1988 - 1995, partners contributed funds and in-kind services valued at \$2.4 million, but since FY 1996 contributions from cooperators have amounted to approximately \$13.7 million.

The Service's funding during the program's history amounts to more than \$5 million. *Steve Kufrin, Wildlife and Habitat*

## Ashland FRO Monitors Lake Sturgeon Spearing Season on Lake Winnebago

The annual lake sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago, Wis., was held from Feb. 9-24, 2002. Poor ice conditions in some areas of the lake and regulation changes resulted in a slower harvest rate this year.

Mandatory daily registration of all sturgeon speared took place at registration stations around the lake. Harvest caps for mature female, immature females and males which trigger closure of the spearing season were not reached by the end of the season.

Ashland Fishery Resources Office biologists assisted Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff at registration stations. Data collected includes a variety of

biological information from the speared fish and demographic data on the spearers. All sturgeon were internally sexed to track the number of mature females, immature females and males harvested. Standard fish data such as length, weight, age structures and recapture information was also determined and recorded.

Experience gained primarily with internal sexing will allow Ashland FRO biologists to continue to accurately collect this data on sturgeon harvested or incidentally killed. Lake Superior fishery agencies often request Ashland FRO technical expertise for sturgeon sex determination and aging. *Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*



-USFWS Photo

All lake sturgeon harvested during the Lake Winnebago spearing season must be registered. Data collected from the fish will help establish harvest limits and manage the species.

## Refuge Centennial Programs at Local Schools Reach 3,000 People

"Countdown to the Centennial" school assembly programs held at 20 schools in nine communities near Horicon National Wildlife Refuge were conducted by Ranger Molly Stoddard throughout March. The presentations reached 2,800 pre-school through 8th grade students and 180 adults. During each one hour program, participants sang happy birthday to the National Wildlife Refuge System, met Region 3's stand up Teddy Roosevelt, watched the NCTC video "America's National Wildlife Refuge System -



- USFWS Photo by Molly Stoddard

As part of the program, students study the Refuge System Visitor's Guide to learn about refuges across the country. The curriculum was developed with a Centennial cost-share grant and is available for use by all field stations.

Where Wildlife Comes First," competed in teams for valuable prizes in the game "Find the Refuge," counted down the Top 10 reasons why they should care about refuges and the Centennial, dressed up in the Big 6 recreational uses of refuges, listened to Rachel Carson's interpretation of the blue goose emblem, sang "Wild Things," and signed a banner pledging to help celebrate the Centennial in specific ways.

Two of the schools were also visited by our blue goose mascot. Each school received a T.R. Bear, a copy of the NCTC video and a copy of the book "Wildlife Refuge, A Classroom Adventure," as prizes. Each student received a blue goose centennial tattoo and their own copy of the National Wildlife Refuges visitor guide map. Teachers received the Region 3 Centennial fact sheet, Rachel Carson's excerpt, a listing of Horicon NWR events and programs, the Friends of Horicon NWR brochure and a leaflet listing ways they can help us celebrate the Centennial (which in some cases was distributed via school newsletters to families at home).

Local reporters attended two of the presentations, providing addi-



- USFWS Photo by Molly Stoddard

Students pose with Teddy Roosevelt during the "Countdown to the Centennial" program presented at their school.

tional outreach. Materials for this special program offering were provided by a Region 3 Centennial cost-share grant which was matched by the Midwest Interpretive Association. As one of Region 3's focus refuges in 2002, "Countdown to the Centennial" is part of Horicon NWR's effort to build momentum for the Centennial. Announced on NCTC's Internet listserv VOICES, the lesson plan for this program was distributed to 23 Service employees representing all regions for their own use. *Molly Stoddard, Horicon NWR*

## 230 Attend 2nd Annual Habitat Day at Crane Meadows NWR

Over 230 people attended the second annual Habitat Day at Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge on Mar. 23. Participants learned about bluebirds and wood ducks and constructed their own bluebird or wood duck box for placement at their home in a location where these birds will benefit. One hundred ten wood duck boxes and 250 bluebird boxes were built.

The woodworking classes at Little Falls and Royalton high schools cut out pieces for 300

bluebird boxes and 50 wood duck boxes prior to the event. Other partners included the Big Lake Sportsman Club, Little Falls Sportsman Club, Randall Sportsman Club, Royalton Sportsman Club, Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Great River-Great People, St. Cloud Area Environmental Council and the Camp Ripley Environmental Office. Refuge staff and 26 volunteers assisted in building the boxes. *Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*



- USFWS Photo by Lori Wolff

Three girls show off the bird houses they just constructed at the Crane Meadows habitat day.



## Winnebago Sturgeon Spearers Aid Service's Fish Health Survey

Lake Winnebago in east-central Wisconsin is the largest inland lake in the state (about 132,000 acres) and is inhabited by part of the largest naturally sustaining lake sturgeon population in the world. Due to their great abundance, Lake Winnebago-strain lake sturgeon are used as an egg source for lake sturgeon re-introduction and rehabilitation projects throughout this species' historical North American range.

Lake sturgeon are also harvested from Lake Winnebago during a popular mid-winter spear fishing season that began in the early 1930's and has been held for more than 70 consecutive years. The total number of state-licensed spearers participating in the event has grown dramatically in recent years as more people seem willing to travel greater distances to participate in what has become a unique recreational fishing event.

Given the ecological significance of this fish population and the local cultural and economic importance of the spear fishery it sustains, the health status of the Lake Winnebago lake sturgeon population is of interest to fish managers throughout the region. Therefore, Service staff from the La Crosse Fishery Resource Office and La Crosse Fish Health Center teamed with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources personnel to collect tissue samples

from lake sturgeon harvested Feb. 9, the opening day of the 2002 spear fishing season, near Stockbridge, Wis.

A total of 26 spearers who registered their fish with the DNR permitted Service staff to collect tissue samples that were later processed by at the FHC laboratory in Onalaska, Wis.

Diagnostic tests are now underway on these lake sturgeon samples to determine the incidence of certain bacterial (e.g., *Aeromonas salmonicida*, *Renibacterium salmoninarum*, *Edwardsiella ictaluri*) and viral (e.g., infectious pancreatic necrosis, viral hemorrhagic septicemia, iridiovirus) pathogens that could compromise the health of this globally significant sturgeon population and lead to disease outbreaks in a wide variety of other fish species.

Test results will be entered into the Service's National Wild Fish



-USFWS Photo

Service biologists work cooperatively with the fishing public and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to collect data that will help keep Lake Winnebago and other sturgeon populations healthy.

Health Survey database to plot the distribution of these and other fish pathogens across the country. This comprehensive fish health information system provides a national perspective that is used by the Service and its partners to improve their efforts in protecting, restoring and managing fish populations across the country. For more information on the Service's National Wild Fish Health Survey, visit the Internet at <http://wildfishsurvey.fws.gov>.

Mark Steingraeber, LaCrosse FRO

## Lake Sturgeon Genetics Project Planning Gets Underway

The Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem Team Lake Sturgeon Committee and cooperating agencies began formal planning to prepare for the 2002 field season. Specifically, staff from the Ashland, Alpena and Lower Lakes FRO's met with Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Department

of Fishery and Oceans personnel to coordinate sample collection for a Great Lakes lake sturgeon genetics project.

The project is funded from a Great Lakes Fishery Trust grant and calls for sampling spawning lake sturgeon populations throughout the Great

Lakes.

Field work will begin in spring 2002. Tissue samples will be collected from sturgeon sampled during the spring spawning run in tributaries to Lakes Huron, Superior and Ontario. Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO

## Region 3 Partners Get \$407,000 for Small NAWCA Projects

On Mar. 5, 2002, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council approved funding for nine small North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants in Region 3. Six of these grant projects are in the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture and three projects are in the eastern portion of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture. The projects are funded under the NAWCA Small Grants Program with matching contributions made by state, federal and nongovernmental partnerships.

### The Region 3 projects identified by

### Joint Venture area are:

#### *Prairie Pothole Joint Venture*

1. Moberg Wetland Centennial Waterfowl Production Area, Minn.
2. Minnesota USFWS Land Restorations and Enhancements
3. Lake Augusta Habitat Restoration, Minn.

#### *Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture*

1. Round Lake Headwaters Protection, Mich.
2. Estel Wenrick Wetlands, Ohio
3. Aboite Wetland Restoration, Ind.

4. Skaff Parcel Protected Forever, Mich.

5. Shallow Wetlands in South central Wisconsin

6. Restore Racoon Creek/Nygren Wetlands, Ill.

The acquisition, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat will advance the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in both the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region and Prairie Pothole Joint Ventures.

*Paul Richert, Migratory Birds and State Programs*

## Accomplishment Reports Received

The following reports were processed by the Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System for accomplishments completed between Mar. 8 - 25, 2002. Employees can search reports using the Report Manager utility in the ARS.

Wood Duck Box Workshop March 23  
*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Seventy Wood Duck Houses Find New Homes  
*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Radio Interview Educates Lake Huron Water Users About Aquatic Invasive Species  
*Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*

Detroit Lakes Fire Staff Present Fire Training Courses  
*Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Nest Basket Program a Success in 2001  
*Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

Historical Museum Invasive Species Display Helps Educate Public  
*Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*

Missouri Man Arrested for Wildfire Arson  
*Gary Jagodzinski, Onalaska LE*

Joint Venture Program Participates at International Partners In Flight Conference  
*Barbara Pardo, Joint Venture*

Wildlife Rehabilitation Session Held at Freshwater Spills Symposium  
*Lisa Williams, East Lansing FO*

Refuge Centennial Programs at Local Schools Reach Almost 3,000 People

*Molly Stoddard, Horicon NWR*

Presentations at Great Lakes Fishery Commission Meetings  
*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

Service, partners cooperate to provide more than \$3 million for fish and wildlife conservation  
*Steve Kufrin, Wildlife and Habitat*

Emiquon Refuge Completes NAWCA Grant  
*Ross Adams, Illinois River NWFR*

Tribes, State and Service Discuss Law Enforcement Issues  
*Ed Spoon, Madison LE*

Binational Program Lake Superior Work Group  
*Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*

Neal Smith Refuge Hosts National Wildlife Refuge System Birthday Party  
*Don Jorgensen, Neal Smith NWR*

Service participates in 29th annual Outdoorama  
*Christopher Mensing, East Lansing FO*

U.S. Rep. Hulshof visits Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge  
*Dave Ellis, Great River NWR*

Region 3 Partners Receive \$4.8 Million for NAWCA Habitat Projects  
*Paul Richert, Migratory Birds & State Pgm*



Shiawassee Refuge Celebrates Refuge System's 99th Birthday

*Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR*

Regional Centennial Accomplishments Briefed to Refuge Chiefs, Supervisors.

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

University students learn about restoration and natural resource damage assessments

*Lisa Williams, East Lansing FO*

Innovation is Rewarded on the Upper Mississippi Refuge

*Cynthia Samples, UMRNW&FR Complex HQ*

Ashland FRO to Inventory Fish Species at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

*Lee Newman, Ashland FRO*

Ashland FRO and USGS Partner to Determine Lake Trout Ages

*Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO*

New Hunter Education Grant approved for Minnesota

*Julie Morin, Federal Aid*

Coordination of Brook Trout Activities in Wisconsin Waters of Lake Superior

*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

Rydell Refuge Nest Structures Revitalized for the 2002 Nesting Season

*Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Service to Establish Management Office at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

*Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

Lake Sturgeon Genetics Project Planning Gets Underway

*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

Ashland FRO Web Page Updated

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Big Muddy Manager Presents to Wildlife Society

*Tim Haller, Big Muddy NWR*

2000 Consent Decree Enters Second Year

*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

Credit Card Program

*William Andersen, ABA (Budget & Finance)*

Sherburne and Crane Meadows Refuge Volunteers Honored

*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

DL WMD's Longstanding Easement Case is One Step Closer to Resolution

*Les Peterson, Detroit Lakes WMD*

Service Partners Receive \$407,250 for North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) Projects

*Paul Richert Migratory Birds & State Pgm*

CSG Customer Service Survey implemented

*John Herron, ABA (CSG)*

Sherburne NWR Participates in Landowners Workshop

*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

Minnesota Valley NWR Recruits for Summer Temporary Positions

*Tom Kerr, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Ashland FRO uses publication to provide technical information for tribal hatcheries

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Web Page Presentation for the MH/TGP Ecosystem Team

*Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Cache River Watershed Benefits from Resource Partnership

*Elizabeth Jones, Cypress Creek NWR*

Ashland FRO Monitors Lake Sturgeon Spearing Season on Lake Winnebago

*Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*

230 Attend 2nd Annual Habitat Day at Crane Meadows NWR,

*Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR*

Winnebago Sturgeon Spearers Aid Service's Fish Health Survey

*Mark Steingraeber, LaCrosse FRO*

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